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HIDDEN IMAGES: A COLLECTION OF
ESSAYS, SHORT STORIES, AND POEMS

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THE SHORT STORY: MIRROR OF HUMANITY

In writing editorials, a tremendous amount of the author filters into his work. Usually, it is due to the fact that the writer has a definite opinion on the subject. It is a feeling, a kinship with the topic, for whatever reason--- however obvious or hidden.

Such is the circumstance of the short story writer. His work is laced and sometimes layered with the feelings and thoughts that lie inside him. Each writer whether amateur or professional seeks to reveal those feelings and thoughts to the reader. Sometimes those feelings stem from events so close to the writer that he feels compelled to write; other times thoughts are written down for the sheer sake of writing.

But whatever the reason or the message conveyed in the short story, it reflects man-- a species whose differences are so vast they come full circle to make surprising similarities.

Short stories show the hurt, anger, happiness, courage, envy, strife, and most assuredly the love every man experiences. They expose the technological giant of all God's creation, sometimes cruelly but always realistically. They offer perspectives we are sometimes too blind or sheltered to see. They are a kalaidoscope that show man as a multi-colored being and each emotion a different color. They are mirrors that reflect what they see honestly and openly, however rewarding or punishing, the images may be for

those who read it. The short story is man, in all his triumph and failure: a reflection to be examined, sometimes praised, sometimes rectified but always seen.

---Pamela Davis
Editor-in-Chief

WHEN I AM GONE

Nearly a year had passed since I had seen that old house. Just driving up made me think of the conversations about fishing, riding the horse, boys, and what was for supper. That old house had been my grandfather's pride and joy. He had built it with his own hands and no formal carpenter training. Once, he said to me, "I constructed that house just like a person should construct his life. He should start with a good foundation and build from there." That was the exact reason his house still stood fifty years later. He had made a solid porch his foundation.

That old porch had been the site of many a lazy evening spent watching people hurry by. It was weathered and uneven, just as the wooden rocking chairs that rested upon it. There were no fancy steps lining the porch; only the porch itself. Even in its simplicity, though, it portrayed a deeper meaning to me. Passersby might consider it merely another old porch or possibly a landmark, but to me it was a foundation--a symbol of strength. My grandfather, with no building experience, had constructed that porch. He had toiled with his own hands to make that porch hold fast. However, only after I entered the house could the true force of his work be felt.

The ceilings were cracked and porous. Cold air was constantly whistling through the walls. I can remember stuffing croacker sacks underneath the door to try and hold the cold wind out. Unfortunately, that only made the

door unbalanced and allowed more air in. By sheer stubbornness, though, my grandfather kept stuffing and hoping for an early spring. Thinking back, he was always stubborn and self-driven. Even though he was quiet, he always managed to get his point across, and one of his main concerns was that the bedrooms and kitchen have plenty of space.

The three bedrooms of his house were almost as large as an acre of cut hay. There were no elaborate, chiffon-filled rooms. As a matter of fact, the only things they contained were two clothes racks and three used mattresses. Empty was an understatement. To him though, it was his house and his bedrooms. He figured he could build them any way he desired. It was that type of self-confidence that warranted my respect. He always had my attention even though, he claimed the only time I listened was when he hollered "dinnertime."

His dining room and kitchen were connected so he would not have to go far for seconds. He also loved to be near the food so he could smell it as soon as it came out of the oven. Both rooms were quite simple. The kitchen had a basic refrigerator and gas stove. The dining room contained a huge table with twenty-five chairs. My grandfather always kept them on hand so he would be ready when the family came to see him. It was when the family was around that he was happiest.

During these times, he was content with his life. He had the strongest foundation of all—a family. Being around him were also the happiest

times of my life. He was my foundation. Just like a block to a house, he was my support. He left me many things besides an old house; one of these was self-confidence. When I was scared to try something new, he was always there behind me. He drove me just as he drove himself. Therefore, he accomplished just what he said he would. I had started out as a weak foundation and he had built me as he had built that house. Now, with him gone, I was standing as solid as the house he had constructed. My grandfather had left me with something far more valuable than any material thing I could possess. I had my own foundation: a will to achieve and the self-confidence to support. Thank you, grandpa, for the gift that will be here for someone when I am gone.

---Tami Rogers
Tau Mu

* * * * *

MAN

Man you say you want me
You say I'm the one.
You say your love for me is awesome.
But I say you use me. I say you lie.
I say you must think I'm blind.
I see you with girls and hear of more
Only thing you ain't done is brought 'um to my door
I lie to myself again and say "It's only a fling."
And still to you, like the snow to the window sill,
I cling.

---Pamela Davis
Alpha Epsilon Iota

FIGHTING THROUGH THE FOG

It starts; the morning breaking clear;
sharp sun rays making all crystal
clear.

It continues, the day; becomes warmer,
muggier.

The mind is beginning to find itself
with shadows of fleecy white clouds;

it is nothing.

The one of all the ages is overhead; the
haze is condensing on the mind, causing

thought: the gray clouds bring rain to
the brain - fear - confusion - deeper

thought.

After the rain, relaxation; but the fog
comes!! Crisis _____

Some will succeed in crawling, walking,
running--fighting their way through

the fog _____

Others will not.

---Darlene Sandlin
Sigma Lambda

FAR UPON A DISTANCE FIELD

Far upon a distance field
A bullet strikes
Takes a life
And the fight begins

Where in an open field
Scared
Afraid
Lying very still
A young man lay dying
Trying to live
While he lies gasping for air
Grasping every sting of life
His last futile attempts of awakening
from this nightmare
Fall upon the very shores of darkness
As the cold steel of a bayonet
Pierces his body
Clinging to his warm body
That soon turns cold

None remember
None recall
And the living shall fall
Life stolen so young and thin
Blackened is the memory of such soldiers

Only the survivors remain
As forgotten derelicts of inner space
Whose bodies and minds
Bear the scars
of a confused and maimed past
Long abandoned
Their eyes are gray with despair
Their hearts are lonely
Broken from the loss of so
many friends

Their souls reach out
 Searching for the silent harmony
 of victory
 They are warriors of a forgotten conflict

---Thomas Matthews
 Alpha Epsilon Iota

* * * * *

HOURLASS

AS I TURNED THE HOURLASS
 GRAINS OF SAND POURED INTO A FAMILIAR
 YET INFINITE VARIETY OF ARRANGEMENTS

I MARVELED AT THE SIMPLICITY

FINALLY THE LAST FEW
 GRAINS STARTED TO PASS THROUGH
 AND IN PASSING
 IT BROUGHT TEARS TO MY EYES

MY TIME WAS OVER

THEN SOMEONE ELSE
 CAME TO TURN THE HOURLASS



---Thomas Matthews
 Alpha Epsilon Iota

BROTHER, COME TO CHURCH

As he stood alone on the corner in front of a long row of dilapidated houses, he clutched his new Bible in one hand and his new Sunday school book in the other. His new possessions were given to him by some visitors from the First Baptist Church which had just been completed after three years of construction. Not only had they given the young boy the new books, they also came to invite him to church next Sunday. He remembered telling them rather disappointedly that he had no way of getting there and how happy he was when they told him that they also had a bus ministry for people with no transportation. He sat down to read the rest of his lesson, looking up at his front door in between every sentence to see if his mother had caught him going to the new church against her will. His mother had not approved of his letting the strangers in while she had been at work and had forbade him to go on the bus; but, he was going anyway. He couldn't wait to meet new people and get involved in all the fun activities the visitors told him they had planned for the children his age.

He heard the roaring bus around the corner and stood to get a better glimpse of it. As it came further toward him, he heard singing . . . "I've got a mansion, just over the hilltop" The bus was shiny white with bold crimson letters on the sides spelling the message, "Brother, Come To Church!" It stood in front of the little boy and the doors hissed open. The driver looked down at the child without a smile, but the boy didn't notice as he bounded up the shiny white stairs. The singing stopped

abruptly as he looked for a place to sit. Why were they all staring at him, he wondered. The deacon driving the bus resumed his scheduled pick-ups, and the bus lurched forward throwing its new passenger into an elderly chaperone's lap. She pushed him off quickly and brushed her pretty yellow dress with two swipes of the Bible she held firmly in her hand. The driver yelled at the boy to go all the way to the end of the bus, after viewing the scene in his rear-view mirror. The boy heeded the command and walked nervously to the rear. The singing resumed at the request of a passenger in one of the front seats . . . "I have decided to follow Jesus. No turning back"

The boy stood in the back wishing the church wasn't so far away. He was confused and a little angry at being treated as if he was an enemy. The visitors had said he would be more than welcome at their church. He watched other riders get on the bus. They got on and sat in front and no one seemed to notice their arrival as they had his. He looked at all the activity going on around him and longed to be involved. Some were eating candy they had bought with their offering money, others were playing card games, two boys were wrestling in the next seat to the last on his right, and one girl sitting alone in the back seat on his right was reading her lesson, not joining the others in a chorus of "Climb, Climb Up Sunshine Mountain." No one spoke to her either, as she sat quietly with her eyes squarely fixed on her book. She was waiting just as anxiously to drive up into the church parking lot as the boy standing beside her was. She wore a wrinkled blue dress

which bore a white visitor tag. It didn't completely hide the rip in the dress as she thought it had. The boy sat down beside her feeling some kind of kinship to her since he also had a tear in his clothes. His was along the seam of his left pants leg and the boy was more acutely aware of it now than he'd ever been. The girl turned a page in her book as the only recognition of his presence and they both noticed that the other passengers were staring at them even more now.

He opened his once new lesson book that had now been reduced to a wrinkled cylinder by his nervous grip. He began to read the lesson he had already read twice hoping to forget the sick feeling he had developed in the pit of his stomach. He couldn't understand what was happening. The girls in the seat beside him were giggling and whispering viciously. Even the two adults in the front seat, he noticed, were hiding their words with their big Bibles and looking a bit too often to be as inconspicuous as they wished. But he couldn't lose himself in the story; the continuous joyful singing and others' happy voices drowned out the words he struggled to read. Looking beyond the girl next to him out the immaculately clean window, he saw the exit that would bring the bus to the road the church was on. It would only last a few more minutes, he thought as the front passengers went on to sing . . . "Jesus loves the little children. All the children of the world. Red and Yellow, Black and White, They are precious in his sight. Jesus loves the little children of the world."

As the bus pressed up the hill where the gigantic church stood gracefully, the two rowdy boys in front of the two in the back

seat began to plan. They whispered and laughed excitedly as the boy behind them watched the beautiful church come into full view. It was awesome. He was almost breathless. The girl beside him stared reverently at it too. It was five stories high with a soaring steeple that he thought was as high as the radio tower near his house. The parking lot, a full two acres of shiny black asphalt, was filled to capacity. He lost himself in the bright colored dresses, fine tailored suits, and flowered hats weaving their way up the hill between brilliant cars parked neatly side by side. Long white marble steps led up to the huge brass handled doors. And above the intricately carved borders along the columns and steep roof rose the huge steeple with its heavy, silver bell at the bottom. He had never seen a place so beautiful.

The bus drove into its allotted space and began to unload its lively cargo. The boy was dazed. His sick feeling was now gone and butterflies now occupied his stomach. As the others began filing out, he felt the people would change their actions once inside the beautiful church. Happiness waited on him in the pews, in the choir, on the balcony, and standing behind the pulpit. The world couldn't be as bad inside something so beautiful. The bus was now empty except for the two back seats, where the boy and girl still sat looking at the magnificent church. The other two rowdy boys were still sitting in front of the unwanted riders, readying their plan. The deacon got off the bus, unconcerned with the stragglers in the back. Before the boy could take his eyes off the high white cross set so grandly

against the perfect blue sky, the mischievous boys in front of him swiftly carried out their plan. Spinning around in their seat they let their bulky hand-me-down Bibles fly straight toward the unwanted passengers' surprised black faces.

---David Burton
Tau Mu



WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE?

MAMA ITS SO COLD. WILL THE HEAT BE ON SOON?
HOW LONG UNTIL?
NO BABY CAN'T GET THE HEAT BACK TILL I GET MONEY
TO PAY THE BILL.
MAMA I DON'T FEEL REAL GOOD I THINK MY HEART IS SICK
CAN I GO TO THE DOCTOR AND GET IT FIXED?
NO BABY DOCTOR BILLS AND MAMA'S MONEY JUST DON'T
MIX
MAMA CAN I GO OUTSIDE FOR A WHILE AND PLAY BALL?
NO BABY ITS COLD OUTSIDE AND THEM SHOES YOU GOT
LIKE NO SHOES AT ALL.
MAMA WHAT WILL I GET FOR CHRISTMAS A TRAIN OR
A BOAT?
NO BABY WHAT YOU REALLY NEED IS A GOOD WINTER COAT.
MAMA DON'T YOU LOVE ME IS "NO" ALL YOU'LL EVER BE
ABLE TO SAY?
BABY I'M SORRY BUT MAMA'S ALWAYS PRAYIN FOR A
BETTER DAY,

---Pamela Davis
Alpha Epsilon Iota

"I Had a Dream"

A man had a dream
A dream that he
fought for until his
life was tragically
ended.

His dream was not
of self fulfillment
his dream was for
all people to share

He dreamt of freedom
for all men; all walks
of life. He wanted men to
be judged by their character--
not by race, creed, or color

Through the protest marches
during the 60's
Non-violent protest marches--
and powerful speeches
A man fought for his
Dream

Trials and tribulations,
hosings, beatings, dog
bitings, hissing, booing,
name calling, police brutality,
and threats from reknowned
opposers became hills in
which to climb

A man was imprisoned
for believing and trying
to fulfill his dream
A dream of love, peace,
and freedom

Strange that a man
had to fight for
rights granted to
him by the Constitution

Funny that a man had
to have a dream of being
free, and work towards
his dream becoming a
reality

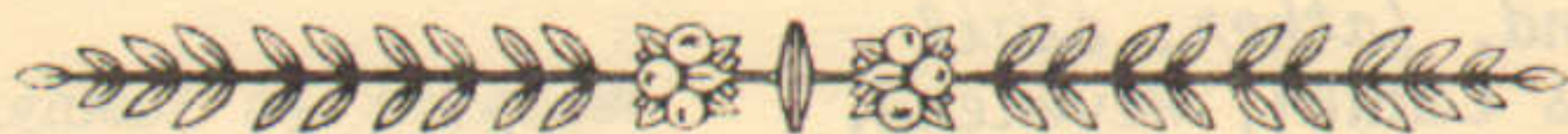
A man who was a
husband, father, civil
rights leader, Reverend,
and a Negro was
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Martin Luther King Jr.
a godsend for the
Negro race, and all other
races . . . but some are
blind and therefore
cannot see
That Martin Luther King Jr.
Stood not only for Blacks
but for you, you and me

Today some wish to honor King
with a national holiday for
all the great contributions
he has made with his dream
Many oppose for reasons of
prejudice, hatred, and ignorance
of what the man truly stood for

Martin Luther King Jr. will
 have a National holiday but
 It will be when all mankind
 embraces in brotherly love
 and realizes that underneath
 we are all one in the same
 Only then will we all be free.

---Felicia Ayers Walker
 Alpha Epsilon Iota



CONVERSATION ON FARCE

He lives with the ghosts of old enslaved men
 Who wanted more but had no time to see
 He looks to them thru years of burden and asks
 "What do you want of me?"
 "You," they say, "you livin' a lie.
 They don't buy us no mo' so
 You b'lieve you free."
 "I am educated. I am bright.
 I am pretty and light."
 "You is dumb, you a slave.
 Only dif'fence you ain't got no chains.
 You says you is the way they say you should be
 But when they gone, can you say I am me?"

---Pamela Davis
 Alpha Epsilon Iota

To Slay The Dragon

The young dreams start absurdly
 not knowing by the youth
 wild, fantastic
 wonderful
 Dragon slayer

Reality slams into the dreamer's mind
 the dreamer stunned at first
 blank reaction
 feelings come back to the mind
 rebels go back to the fantasy
 calmness

A Dragon slayer - again

Insistent reality appears - and - appears
 the dreamer holds to the aberration-
 Reality again- again
 the dreamer weakens
 the mind unfolds
 anxiety

---Are there dragons to slay---

Reality-decisions are crossed road-by the dreamer-
 One to stay - slave - maybe
 Two to move - free - always
 Two to reality - becomes exciting
 The dragons are dying - but - but-----
 lurking in the shadows-----

---Darlene Sandlins
 Sigma Lambda



BLUET

Children
The last boundary of innocence
The young
Fortunately
Know no evil
Speak no evil
See no evil
Until
Too soon
They are taught
The ways and means
Of a troubled world

---Thomas Matthews
Alpha Epsilon Iota



DEAR THOUGHTS

Early morning is such a personal time of day. No one arguing, no one clanking pots and pans in the kitchen; just still silence. Rising from a restful night's sleep and making plans to spend a day of absolute solitude with my thoughts was my waking joy this morning. My family had designated today as being "Mother's Day." A bit late since it was mid-September, but a well-needed rest for me. My husband and little boy had sensed my urgency in needing some time alone and were more than kind in letting me have the day to myself to sort things out in my conscience. No one could ask for a dearer family.

I have always found a harmony between nature and solitude. And with this thought in mind, I set out on my thoughtful adventure to the forest located just behind our house. You might wonder, if I wanted to get away from the routine of everyday life, why stay so close to home? The answer is quite simple. Although the woods were close to my home, they were far enough away to let me forget my chores for the day. I have always felt that you do not have to run away from whatever is troubling you to find solitude; just find an out-of-the-way place close by and you can think things through. My choice to take a day off was not because I had a serious problem I had to reconcile; I do not really consider my daily chores a problem. My one goal in life is to provide a loving, unified home life for my family. I guess I just needed to get away from the pressures of being a wife and mother for a while. I think most women get that feeling sometimes.

I began my journey by taking the path in back of my house which led to the forest. My husband had cleared that very path the day we arrived at our new home. He had told me he had done it in anticipation of our children being able to play in these woods and being able to grow up appreciating nature the way we both had been raised to appreciate it.

As I was walking along the path, I felt small pebbles poking through the earth; every now and again catching one sharply on the heel of my foot. I knew by the time I reached home late that afternoon, my feet would be covered with bruises. I did not really mind, though; it was such a nice feeling touching the soft dirt between those dreadful pebbles.

A gentle breeze was blowing through the path. The wind blew the small ferns around the edge of the path just enough to softly brush them against my legs and tickle me. The trees were swaying ever so rhythmically with the breeze, too. Their leaves would turn slightly enough for the sun to catch their undersides and send off sparks of golden reflections.

Birds flew overhead and were singing such sweet tunes. I knew they were performing just for me. Animals can be show-offs just like man. The last few butterflies were fluttering here and there before their journey south. I was glad I had gotten one last chance to see them.

I finally reached my destination along the path. It was a small ridge located above a shallow stream. On the other side of the stream were acres of the most beautiful woodlands the eyes could behold. I guess I was lucky I did not have to go far to find my place of solitude. The devastating glory of it all took my breath away. It was a once in a lifetime experience to see such natural beauty. This ridge was my chosen spot when I needed time to myself: to sit, to think, to relax.

I could hear the soft trickle of water beneath the ridge. The creek looked so clear and refreshing that I had to lean down and take a small drink. Not so much that I was thirsty, as much as just to taste the sweet water. Tiny minnows were anxiously swimming around in the water, as if they knew some forbidden secret. Watching them made me laugh. I was glad no one was nearby, for they might have thought I was insane.

Looking out over the ridge and into the large woodlands was a relaxing sight. The sun could not have been any brighter that day. It glowed across its domain and left obscure shadows in its path. The trees seemed to be standing on the very ends of their roots with outstretched branches rising to it. They were draining in all the radiance they could store; and I joined them by letting my face drain in the precious warmth of the rays. Slowly opening my eyes, I could see some branches were bare, for their leaves had already fallen off. Those that were left possessed

such brilliant shades of red, yellow, rust, and tan that they resembled jewels. Just to have picked a few would have made me feel rich.

Suddenly an obstacle caught my eye. Why, it was a newly built bridge across the stream. I did not remember seeing it there the last time I was here. I pondered on its origin for a moment and then resolved to ask my husband about it. I did not remember seeing anyone new in the area.

Looking out over the creek again, I could picture my son frolicking with his friends through those same trees I was gazing at now. I thought of the repeated times I had told him and his friends to be careful, because one never knew when a hunter had set out a new trap. I wondered if they ever heard me over their loud squealing and laughing? I supposed they had since no catastrophe had happened yet.

I stood and swept in all the vast beauty my eyes and mind could hold. Anyone could forget their troubles viewing such a lovely sight. It had definitely been a relaxing and fulfilling day for me. I thought for a moment of what everyone was doing back home. With my thoughts eased in my mind, I was ready to go back home and face the responsibilities of being a good wife and mother. As the sun slowly faded down, I slowly turned toward home. As I had suspected, I could feel the stones' bruises on my heels.

But something was different. I could not quite grasp what was wrong. The birds. Yes, that was it. The birds were not being their usual noisy

selves as sundown approaches. They were not chattering about finding their nests or settling down for the evening. They were silent. The wind had also died down to a complete stop. No leaves were rustling, and no branches were swaying.

Then the silence was broken by a piercing gun shot. I frantically ran up the path toward home, not knowing what to do or where else to run. I had to find my family. Then as if all my energy had subsided, I stopped. I felt one sharp blow and knew that I had been shot. I could do nothing but fall in the spot where I once stood. Up above me I could hear faint voices and could vaguely picture three images. The person nearest me had a gun in his hand. Blinking slowly I heard one say, "And to think we were about to call it a day and head home. That doe there is at least three years old, John."

"Ain't she a beauty, though? Can't wait to show my boy. He thinks he is the hunter in the family."

As they began to laugh, I gently closed my eyes and thought no more.

---Regie Sparks
Tau Mu

They were not
settling down for the evening. They were
silent. They would not look down to a
complete stop. No leaves were rustling, and

no branches were swaying.

Mostly the silence was broken by a faint

gun shot. I remembered that up the hill

Emory had been firing. I had been told that

elsewhere. I had been told that

then as I all my energy and interest. It was

stopped. I felt one sharp blow and then

that I had been shot. I could do nothing

but fall in the sand. I felt a

up above me. I could hear faint voices and

could vaguely recognize that I was

person. I heard a gun in the distance and

blinking slowly. I heard the

to think of what I had done. I

and heard him. That was the last I

(I was never able to remember what had

happened. I was a pretty thing. Can't

wait to tell you. The things that

happened in the house were very

but I never saw a good picture of it.

As they began to laugh, I

closed my eyes and thought no more.

of it. I was in a

for a while. I was

and all. I was

and I was

and I was

and I was



